UNITY

Freedom, Fellowship and Character in Religion.

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UNITY.

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Ten weeks ten cents. UNITY will be sent ten weeks on trial to a new name for ten cents. Subscribers are invited to send lists of trial names. We offer liberal premiums for any number of trial subscriptions from one up; particulars sent on application.

A Christmas Thought.

How strange the thought
That once that Life divine
Found in a dimpled baby form its shrine!
How sweet the thought
That first its budding grace
Bloomed 'neath the love-light of a mother's face,
And strength to do the Father's large behest
Came from the tender comfort of her breast!
How thrills the thought
And makes each morning shine,
That baby eyes still beam with love divine!
That baby hands bring close that century far,
And light each Christmas morn with Bethlehem's star!

—*Kate Starr Kellogg.*

WE trust that our ministerial friends will not waste the Christian Christmas season by trying to refine about the nature or essence of Jesus of Nazareth. At this time he should be too potent and living a factor for disputations or theological inquiries.

LET our Christian celebration be characterized by the spirit of thankfulness and tenderness which we are wont to ascribe to him whose birth is commemorated. It is a poor compliment to Jesus to claim that his was a life of generosity inspired of God, and then, in his name, to proceed to niggardly map out the kingdom of heaven in such a way that there is only a small territory for the blessed, and a boundless region for the accursed of earth. The height of the impudence is reached when, in the classification, he who classifies complacently puts himself and his own into the realms of the blessed, and draws the line perhaps so as to leave out his nearest neighbors, whom his children respect and to whom he himself grants and receives the amenities and courtesies of life.

LET him who would enjoy the Christmas season, mark well the boundaries between indulgence and enjoyment, between pleasure and dissipation. There is a point beyond which the feast ceases to be a festival, and woe to him, young or old, who passes that point.

AMONG the other anecdotes now going the rounds of the press about our welcomed and distinguished visitor, Sir Edwin Arnold, is one giving his reply to the question of a New York acquaintance inquiring into the progress of the work of Christian missionaries in India. The answer was, that it was making about the same impression "as if any one should attempt to perfume the ocean by pouring cologne water into it." There are 280,000,000 people in India, Mr. Arnold tells us, and "each Buddhist among them has an idea that no one can bring him any better religion than he already possesses." With Mr. Arnold as interpreter of this religion, in his great poem "The Light of Asia," this subject is one to be respected and sympathized with.

THE *Christian Union* for December 12, contains an editorial on the "New Orthodoxy," which is one of the many characteristic productions of the day. The clearness of it consists in its obscurities. It is interesting to see how, in the transition of mind from a basis of revealed and miraculous religion to a natural and scientific one, the heart lags behind the head, and still craves so much for some of the old phrases and formulas, that it enlists the head in the work of clothing them with a new metaphysics so that the words may abide, even though the old thoughts are all gone. In this article the editor speaks of "Theodore Parker's jibes at *sin* and his desire, therefore, to substitute a confession of sins," and proceeds to plead for the existence of some entity to which the word "sin" applies, if we understand it, but we are quite sure we do not. We might as well plead for the substances of darkness and cold. After all, the "new orthodoxy" is another "doxy," trying to differentiate itself from some "heterodoxy," of which in this article, Channing, Theodore Parker and the Unitarians generally, are representatives.

CHRISTMAS has its abuses as well as its right use and happy privilege. The present writer caught a hint of one, in the pauses of a Christmas shopping tour through one of our large stores, during which some remarks of one of the young women clerks to another waiting customer were overheard, complaining against the practice of soliciting contributions from the smaller employés of these large establishments, for the benefit of those of higher position and larger pay. We do not say the spirit of Christmas benefaction should never take this form of tendering some token of respect and gratitude to a deserving employé or superintendent, but the frequent and thoughtless practice of collecting small sums for such purposes from clerks who receive six, seven or eight dollars a week, may prove a real hardship to those asked to give, and whose position is one in which refusal seems a mark of ingratitude, and may even prove dangerous. Those soliciting subscriptions at this season for such purposes, should be very sure their object is a good one, and exercise great care in the selection of those whom they asked to help further their beneficent schemes.

THE *Christian Standard* talks in a strain half humorous, half sympathetic of "Wheelbarrow Christians." The wheelbarrow is a serviceable but awkward and ugly vehicle, which has to be pushed if it renders any service,—which empties itself completely when turned over,—thus bearing out the resemblance to those people who can not stumble and fall without losing all their religion, whom a slight accident or misfortune deprives of all resolution and courage. Like the wheelbarrow, too, these people are helpless when upset until lifted up and set in a natural position again. The wheelbarrow is praised for capacity and strength, but these to be utilized require a great many favoring conditions, much skill and patience on the owner's part, and a clear track ahead.

PROFESSOR WILLIAM T. HARRIS is one of those instructors in the higher learning whom we are not always able to follow or understand, yet to whom we stand indebted, with many others, in many ways. We sometimes find him more mystical than profound, more recondite than clear, but his high services to the cause of education and that of general culture must be gladly admitted all round. Prof. Harris has lately been delivering in Boston a course of four lectures on "Practical Lessons of History," which from the extracts we have read deserve the title. He divides Greek history into three main epochs, describing it as a drama in three acts. The period related in the Iliad and Odyssey marks the first, when the Greek national consciousness began to find expression. The Persian war taught the rising young nation its own strength, imparted the principle of individualism; and the third period dates from the reaction against Asia under Alexander, when foreign ideas were presented, and the nation began to take on a more cosmopolitan tone. Greek civilization did not end with the downfall of the nation, says Prof. Harris. Its splendid achievements in art and literature will live through all time.

THE sisters of Germany are moving toward a broader education and higher privilege. Heretofore the universities of that country have been closed to women; now there is a systematic movement, led by Fraulein Lange, of Berlin, to establish gymnasia and real-schulen for girls. This will bring collegiate privileges that will, in due time, necessitate university advantages. The women in America are aiding their German comrades. The movement is led by Prof. Carl Wenckenbach, of Wellesley College, to organize an American section of the general association of German teachers, which is constituted of regular members, to which any woman teacher or member of a board of education is eligible, as to the associate membership. The annual membership fee is seventy-five cents. Subscription blanks for this section can be obtained at UNITY office, or any subscription sent here will be turned over to the Chicago representative and duly credited. This movement is one in which all women should be particularly interested. The higher education is international in its scope. The open doors of Harvard and Yale perhaps will follow this, the still more coveted open doors of Leipsic, Berlin, and perhaps Oxford and Cambridge in England.

MANY of the Bible texts in support of the pleasing theory that virtue is its own reward, that honest merit is sure to win recognition in this world, are hard to understand and harder still to prove. "I have not seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread." This was the particular bit of scriptural proverbial philosophy in the mind of the writer of an inscription on a cross of lath which marked the grave of an old and faithful minister in a rural graveyard: "Righteous but forsaken." Still, perhaps even this slight act of service, with its reminder to the negligent and untrustworthy, helped fulfill the text it seemed to deny.

FROM time to time, some new case arises which calls attention anew to the terrible strait in which many of the young women employés in our large city stores are placed, in their position as daily bread-winners. The last to fall under our notice is one mentioned by the *Commercial Gazette*, of Cincinnati, and emphasized anew by the *Philanthropist*, New York. It is that of a young woman who held a place in the American Toilet Supply Company of the former city, and who was dismissed to make room for one who "knew how to handle the gentlemen patrons." She was told that her success in her work depended upon her power to make herself attractive to gentlemen customers, and when she replied that she received only four dollars a week, she was informed by the manager, with a significance of manner not to be misunderstood that "other girls made thirty or forty." The *Philanthropist* says that "a company which will tolerate such a manager and such business methods ought itself to be dismissed and boycotted by all good citizens"; a sentiment we heartily indorse.

Christmas Greeting.

A truce to care! For this glad week of the Christmas-tide, a truce to sectarian bitterness, party anxiety, denominational schemes, theological refinings. A truce to morbid, self-examination and subtle concerns for the future welfare of souls! It is the time to live, not to think about life; it is the time to realize, not to dream of better or higher existences. It is the time to enjoy, not to discuss enjoy-

ment. It is the week of synthesis and not of analysis. It is the week when the child in the soul should assert itself, bid defiance to years, mount superior to gray hairs, double up wrinkles into dimples and make rheumatic feet move rhythmically. Greetings, to all those who, in the spirit of this great historic season, welcome the gentle reign of the "Abbot of Misrule" and are willing to submit graciously to the dominion of the generous "King of Unreason!" Christmas bells ring this week in hearts that beat under skins of many colors, hearts that are protected from the weather by fustian and by velvet, by jeans and by broadcloth. UNITY invokes a blessing upon the Christmas feast that is found around the meagre board of poverty, and, as well, that which tempts the appetite with the viands that wealth alone can procure. UNITY greets, at this time, those who delight in the thought of Jesus as the incarnate God come to wash away the sins of the world, and, none the less, those who see in Jesus the rising nature of man lifting itself into divine beauty and transcendent power. In the spirit of the Wise Men of the East and in many respects the wiser men of the West who have brought their frankincense and myrrh to the cradle of the Christ Child, we welcome this week all those who have found in any cradle revelations of tenderness; all those who have discovered in any mother Madonna grace; all those who, by the foot of any cross, have realized the triumph of spirit, the glory of renunciation, the power of goodness.

A merry, merry, Christmas to all! Laughter is drawn ever from the fountains of love. It is akin to purity, sweetness, love, and these are of God. Let us then carol as becomes those who realize that the Christmas-tide has borne itself through the hearts of men ever since the Sun-god first seemed to turn again his genial face to shine upon the disconsolate and anxious children of superstition in the far, far away.

The Christmas-tide we celebrate encircles the globe and bears in its bosom all the anointed children of God, and what is still larger, all the anointing bounty of the Infinite Providence that touches, with troubling, suffering, and aspiration, the singing children of men. This Christmas-tide is a part of that

"Silvery tide, called 'Sunny Side,'
Goes creeping around the earth,
And never a place but wins a grace
In the jubilant flood of mirth;
From the dancing gleam on the fretted stream
To the dimple on baby's cheek,
That in and out, to his merry shout,
Twinkles a hide-and-seek.

"Spirit of Love, in the blue above
Who makest the sun to flame,
Who guidest the flight of the planet bright,
And callest the stars by name,
It is thou dost hide in the 'Sunny Side,'
And creepest from heart to heart!
And, sou or clod, we share the God
Who comes,—and the shadows part!"

Christmas in the Church.

A *holiday* can be made at any time by a vote of a legislature, but a *festival* is a thing of growth. Just how and when it began is often past finding out. Its roots run deep in the soil of usage. New associations become engrafted upon the old stock and the growth goes on. The mingled odors of centuries breathe from each year's blossoming. And of none of our festivals is this truer than of Christmas. None better illustrates the persistent force and survival of a great festival once rooted in the popular love and use than this. It fell under the ban of Puritan England and it was given no place in Puritan New England. It was reason enough to these sturdy reformers not to observe the day because Rome and Canterbury did keep it. Its non-observance was the openest expression of their dissent and protest, in respect of certain doctrines and principles represented by the ritualistic churches with which they were in encounter. Gothic arches, organ music and liturgies had for these reformers a like flavor with Christmas. We, to-day, can see how natural all this was, and can honor the earnestness that spared nothing which seemed to stand in the way of a better State and a purer Church. May it not be that the festival itself has risen out of the contention into a better and finer religious observance, and that the Puritan's protest and non-observance have had their part in redeeming the day to larger meaning and use?

Born and bred in New England, the writer does not remember ever to have seen a Christmas tree in his childhood, and he went to the public school on this day, as on other days of the week; and in his college course, while teaching a district school some thirty miles from Boston one winter, he followed the custom of the place and taught also on this day. On his first Christmas in college he remembers going, with fellow-students, to the old cathedral in Franklin street (Catholic) to hear the music and witness the celebration of the day; for the Episcopalian portion of Boston could not then rival the older church in these matters, while few, if any, of the Congregational churches, whether Unitarian or Trinitarian, made any account of the festival. These facts are mentioned in illustration of the change which thirty years have brought about in all the non-ritualistic churches. Of these, some which are most marked by "advanced" thought surpass the most conservative, in their recognition of Christmas. If not on the day itself, then upon the nearest Sunday the service takes on special features. Carol and anthem sing the common joy. The sermon takes direction from the associations of the season. The walls are hung with greenery, and young and old rejoice in the fuller coming of "peace on earth, good-will to men."

And much good springs from this wider observance of the festival in the churches. The average man's religion carries none too much of joy in it. Christmas strikes a kindlier and more light-hearted strain. Its celebration is not conditioned upon this or that form of theology. The day is full of human associations of the deepest and widest scope. The commemoration of our typical life rises into the commemoration of all which that life signifies and is prophecy of. The angel song above the Judean hills has sounded upon the inner ear of chosen souls through all the ages. The Babe of Bethlehem hallows to us the cradled infancy by the humblest hearth today. The star that drew the Magi forth, still shines above the world's new births of faith and hope. The pictured life of the Christ is more and more seen to be, as Mr. Emerson once said, the life of every man "writ large." And thus every aspect of the special, widens out into the universal, and Christmas carries with it a choral song of human hope and love and joy.

In some of our churches the congregation and Sunday-school hold their separate Christmas services. In others, they join in a common order of service of wide enough range and variety to interest both young and old; and the merry-making, with supper and carol and "wonderful tree," is given a special evening. Our own experience commends the latter plan. The Sunday-school so far takes our children from the church service that it is alike pleasant and profitable, on these special festival days, to bring the home into the church. This carries out the idea of a church "home". Some of these orders of service have much beauty, and furnish suggestion and material for a more finished order in time. Such an order of service would be of great help and save much private care and expense now incurred in the preparation of festival programmes; but we yet want that happy combination of taste and large interpretation of the inner meaning of the festival which shall set the things commonly believed among us to noble expression in music and liturgical form.

F. L. H.

Christmas.

Children faces gleam to-day,
Hearts are happy, glad as May;
Gifts surprise us with their cheer,
Earth is heaven, for heaven is here.
When the year is fading slow,
Angel pleasures mortals know;
In our hearts and homes we find
Eden lingers yet behind:
When the soul God's Gospel feels,
Paradise about it steals,
And it never goes away.
Life itself is Christmas-day!

WILLIAM BRUNTON.

Malden, Mass.

Christmas in the Community.

Into a woe-begone and forlorn little village of ugly houses, without a flower or a green thing in any one's window, a woman once moved who loved flowers. She filled her bit of garden with flowers, she trained over the bare walls of the old house, she set pots of flowers in all her windows. Everyone who passed stopped to look at the flowers. Presently, one and another of the neighbors caught the love of flowers, and started bits of gardens and set out bulbs and roots and planted seeds. In a short space of time there was not a house in the village that had not flowers in its windows, and the village was forlorn and ugly no longer.

This is the likeness of the way in which all good gets its growth among men. It must have a little safe, fenced spot to grow in at first. There it must be watered and tended till it makes itself a conspicuous success. After that, when the good has once fairly set the fashion, you will scarcely stop it from spreading.

Thus, long ago, religion had to set apart for itself sacred spots and temples. In these choice places, men might retire and catch the sense of the eternal mysteries. But presently, as soon as certain men really got the idea of religion, they saw what their temples were for. Their shrines and temples were merely to set the standard for the pure and holy life which should be lived in all places as well as in the shrine. For God was not in the shrine only, or to be approached at one chosen time, but God was to be found everywhere.

The world is learning the same lesson from the observance of the Christmas time, about the universal law of our common humanity. The world has made an ideal day of Christmas. On one day, at least, men should live towards each other as the law of love dictated. On this ideal day everyone should tell the story of love. All should tell it to as many as possible. Everyone should think of all his friends, and give them, if nothing more, loving wishes. For a great love had come into the world, and for one blessed day everyone should share it and pass it on.

But lo! whoever tried the experiment of this ideal day, could not be satisfied to stop when it was over. Why, indeed, should we tell the story of our human brotherhood and live the life of "the sons of God" for only one day? Give a man a taste of this new joy and he must have more. Let a village or a nation see the beautiful flowers in only one man's garden, and presently a new and better fashion must be set for everyone.

This is the influence of keeping Christmas in a community. No person can live the ideal life and not stir other men to the same. No body of people can live the ideal life for as much as a day, and not wish to live the ideal life every day.

C. F. D.

Christmas in the Home.

If the Christmas spirit is strong enough in the home, the Christmas way will be all right. And what is the Christmas spirit? That of right giving; the leaving out of the significance of that adjective leaves out most of the good of Christmas in the home.

The home itself should be only the center of every circle of giving. If it is center and circumference too, it is nearly a failure;—not quite a failure though, for the spirit of giving, however narrow, has in it some good, and is just that much better than no giving at all.

Unlimited means might seem an easy way to right giving—it ought to be—but it very often creates the spirit of getting, and makes a wrong standard for giving; and I sometimes think the richest people have really the hardest work to acquire the true Christmas spirit, however good their motives, and that they have peculiar temptations in their way that people of limited means do not meet. It is that which costs *us* something which gives us pleasure, and so people with a great deal of money have to put much thought, individuality and love into their giving to make it cost enough.

In all houses it is well to keep Christmas in mind during most of the year, with gradual preparation, thoughtfulness as to what is the best thing for this or that one (not something that will merely "do"), the satisfaction of "looking things over" a good many times before the giving away day comes, so that giver as well as receiver may have happy anticipations—all this in order to avoid "a grand scrabble at the end, from which I emerge breathless but triumphant," as a friend of mine puts it. She is not so triumphant as her remark sounds, for she has lost much leisurely pleasure.

To whom shall we give our costliest gifts—in the home, I mean? Shall it be to the children? It is often difficulty to foster the spirit of simplicity, to teach that there is a higher value than money value, or that "the years" earn for father, mother or other elders in the home that which should find expression in all ways, in gift giving among others. Perhaps these affirmations may furnish a key-note that will help in deciding this question.

Shall we give outside of the home, or will not that be too heavy a tax upon the purse of most persons? That depends much upon the way of both home and outside giving, but it seems to me that if the same amount of money was carefully, slowly, lovingly, made to serve in gift-giving, to two or three times as many persons as are in the home, it would "bring in returns" of love and pleasure two or three times as large.

If we give outside of the home, must our prettiest and most costly gifts go to those who have things that are "in keeping," or shall they have the insignificant articles and the best go to those who have little? If you will try both ways in two successive years, you need never be puzzled again as to which is the real Christmas way. It is difficult to make yourself give a home-made iron holder to Mrs. Million, and do you wonder how she will "take it?" Then it is time for you to stop and ask yourself *why* you give her anything at all and where the Christmas spirit has fled to.

If the iron-holder to Mrs. Million means a good lamp to Mrs. Penny who has only a poor lamp, and if both these outside gifts mean a much simpler gift to the little girl at your home, you will have to face the matter fairly, and with just as true a Christmas spirit as you can command, decide for yourself.

There is one thing about the true Christmas spirit,—if one of a household has it "good and strong," it spreads rapidly, and the spirit of getting (which is a form that selfishness easily takes at Christmas time) melts away before it like frost before the sun. *One* can do very much towards "creating an atmosphere;" and so one home, the center of a circle wide enough to include or touch many homes or persons, sends out a powerful influence for good out of all proportion to the money cost of its gifts; for love, thoughtfulness and unselfishness will "tell," always.

"Christmas *in* the home, did you say you were writing about?" some one may ask me. Yes, for "in the home" at Christmas time means in the home circle, and the home circle can be very large sometimes; and so I hope that all of you who are touched by this "gift of speech," will feel that you are in my home circle this Christmas time.

JUNIATA STAFFORD.

Christmas-Tide.

Let the legend, sweet and tender,
That adown the ages runs
From Egyptian, Buddhist, Hebrew,
From all races 'neath the suns,
That a Savior hath arisen,
That a man child, born of God,
Hath within its own strong spirit
Power to lift men from the sod.

Let it teach its highest meaning,
Let us read the writing large,
See, within the blest Evangel,
Hints of man's divinest charge.
Every father hath within him
Something of the Holy Ghost;
Every mother, true to duty,
May a hero-prophet boast.

Every child to every parent
Brings a message high and pure,
Glorifying thought and action,
Heralding redemption sure.
Every land is God's, and holy;
Each race hath its Christ and Cross,
By whose light man marcheth starward,
Victor over death and dross.

Thus the Western magi bring not
Costly gifts to one alone,—
But to every true Messiah
Earth's Grand History hath shown.

—*Anna H. Frost, in "Love and Loyalty."*

Christmas and the Puritan Forefathers.

So much time, indeed, has been spent, and, in their view, so much evil done in making merry over Christmas and its attendant train of holidays, that our forefathers felt it a solemn duty to discontinue its observances and to take no other notice of the day than to denounce everything associated with it. They were not of those who would make such a day memorable to their children by a Christmas dinner where a peacock was baked in a huge pie, the magnificent tail spread at one side, the head with its crest protruding at the other, and holding in the gilded beak a sop soaked in spirits and set on fire; a dish so sacred that oaths could be taken on it, and that must be served according to time-gray custom, only to the chief guest, and only by the lady of the house, with music going before and all her damsels following after. Nor this at all, because they had n't the peacock; they would not if they had a wilderness of peacocks. Nor would these unco good people condescend to see at a Christmas dinner the pig's head stuffed with shallots and herbs and spices, soaked in vinegar, and simmered in sherry, in imitation of the royal boar's head; a dish more ancient than the time of Ivanhoe, served then on gold and silver, with flourish of trumpets, as became the king of the forest. They went further; they would have no Christmas dinner at all, and in their hatred of everything that once had part in what they esteemed popish idolatry, they extended their horror of the affair even to the traditional mince pie, for no other reason than that it had been wont to belong to the day's feasting, to be called Christmas pie, and that its crust had originally been shaped to represent a manger, although possibly every Puritan did not know that circumstance.—*Saturday Evening Herald.*

A Timely Word to the Receiver of Gifts.

From the receiver's standpoint all gifts may be divided into things that we want, and things that we don't want. It takes no particular skill or grace to receive things that we want, but as, in times of general giving, like Christmas, the larger part of the gifts we get are things that we don't want, that branch of receivership is worth attention. The two ordinary reasons for not wanting things are the vulgar one that they do not strike us as intrinsically desirable, and the more complex reason that we don't want to receive them from the particular giver. A general remedy applicable to reluctances due to either of these causes is to keep strenuously in the mind the happiness of the giver in giving. Remembering that you are delighted with a trifle from some one you love, because it makes you happy to have been even passively instrumental in procuring him the happiness of giving; applying the same principle, you can accept ever so costly a gift from some one for whom you care little, without any irksome sense of obligation, since of course the giver had the best of it any way, and it is a great deal kinder and more generous to sacrifice one's personal inclinations and accept, than to refuse. Remember, persistently, that by receiving with due grace you secure to another person a desirable form of happiness.

After all, little children do it best. They are the superlative receivers, and it is because they are that we delight to give them things. They are frankly and delightfully appreciative. Obligations set as lightly on them as the air. They value their gifts simply by the pleasure they get out of them, and prefer a rag baby to the deed of a brick house. They take a jumping-jack from Mary, the laundress, and a jeweled pin from Aunt Melinda Crœsus, without the least distinction of happy approval. The nearer we get to their guilelessness, the nearer we approach perfection in receiving, and in all the Christmas attributes besides.—*Scribner's Magazine.*

"As there are persons who seem to walk through life with their eyes open, seeing nothing, so there are others who read through books, and perhaps even cram themselves with facts, without carrying away any living pictures of a significant story which might arouse the fancy in an hour of leisure, or gird them with endurance in a moment of difficulty. Ask yourself, therefore, always, when you have read a chapter of any notable book, not what you saw printed on a gray page, but what you see pictured in the glowing gallery of your imagination. Have your fancy always vivid, and full of body and color. Count yourself not to know a fact when you know that it took place, but then only when you see it as it did take place."—*John Stuart Blackie.*

IT is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas, when its mighty founder was a child himself.—*Dickens.*

The Study Table.

Books here noticed promptly sent on receipt of price by W. W. Knowles & Co., Publishers and Booksellers, 204 Dearborn St., Chicago.

Princess Dandelion's Secret. By Martha Burr Banks. St Paul: D. D Merrill Co. Cloth. pp. 238.

The title of this story and its pretty binding of white and green with colored dandelion plants and blossom on the cover, would lead one to suppose it was a story for little children. Perhaps it was intended for such; but it seems rather better fitted for half-grown or quite grown people, in many ways. Another instance is it of "a little child shall lead them," and this time the leading is towards a belief in foreign missions, and an active support of the same. The association of little Dorothy and her grandfather, the descriptions of the life on "Morning Glory Farm," and the conceit of "Princess Dandelion's Secret," are beautiful, and little Dorothy, herself, is a charming study. Much that Grandfather Downing says is too advanced for the child reader's comprehension; and, also, if the writer intended this book for children, she should have simplified, or left out many such paragraphs as these: "She (Dotty) never mentioned these vagaries to any one but Sandy. She had an intuition that they were a trifle too subtle for the apprehension of most persons." "But Dotty's philosophy served her well until she became entangled in some confusing facts that apparently contradicted her theories."

Writers for children seem scarcely able to realize how limited is the vocabulary of even an intelligent child. Few could read these paragraphs for themselves, and even the "reader aloud" must either do some judicious skipping, be plied with "What does that mean?" or see the interest of her listener become intermittent.

"Princess Dandelion's Secret" is a pretty story in spite of these defects, and is written in a broad spirit and with a sunny tone.

J. S.

Betty a Butterfly. By A. G. Plympton. Illustrated by the author. Published by Roberts Brothers: Boston. Price, $1.00.

This is meant to be a pretty story for children, and would probably be called so by many; but there is an unnaturalness about the various "conditions" in the book, and a sentimentality that make it unwholesome in some respects. A sensitive or nervous child, reading it, would learn what "morbid" meant, and could easily imagine herself in that state upon slight occasion. The book idealizes the unrealities rather than the realities, of life; and it is not well to teach children to admire an intensity of feeling or action that would not be likely to occur under right conditions. People's ideas of what is noble differ widely, of course, and a writer for children takes upon herself a heavy responsibility when she sends out a story that will put questionable "notions" into the minds of her impressionable little readers.

Pris. By the author of 'Miss Toosey's Mission" and "Laddie." Boston. Roberts Brothers. Cloth, pp. 131. Price, fifty cents.

It seems as though the author of stories so good as the three mentioned above, ought to be glad to have his or her name upon every one. "Pris" is a story laid in rural England and among "plain folk," and is interesting in its simple development. The ending is sad, most people would think, except that the hero or heroine both died as a direct physical consequence of fulfilling their widely differing and separating duties, to which they also owed their highest development. As some one has said: "The best that art can produce, the polish of a gentleman, is hardly equal to the best that nature can do in her highest moods." And so Pris and her humble lover, Will, were "fine" through love and self-sacrifice for others.

Out of the Heart. Selected by John W. Chadwick and Annie Hathaway Chadwick. Troy Nins & Knight. Price, $1.25.

Mention has already been made in our columns of this excellent compilation. The selections are mainly love poems, "for lovers young and old," comprising all the old favorites, and introducing us to some new acquaintances in rhyme. The collection is larger and richer than that already known and prized in "Tender and True." The publisher's work is done in beautiful and dainty style, making the book exactly suitable as wedding gift from pastor or friend, or wedding anniversary present. We are glad Mr. Chadwick did not practice a mistaken modesty and leave out those gems of his own composition: "The Oldest Story" and "In an Unknown Tongue." The collection comprises poems from over eighty different sources, almost entirely English.

THE STAR PUBLISHING COMPANY has issued a book entitled "The World's Fair; Its Meaning and Scope," by H. G. Cutler, sold we believe only on subscription. It is highly recommended by such World's Fair authorities as Thomas B. Bryan, first vice-president of the Columbia Exposition, Hon. Ben. Butterworth, and Mrs. Bertha M. Palmer, President of the Lady Board of Managers. The Chicago *Tribune* says: It is hard to say which will gain the most from reading this book, he who is to see the Exposition, or he who is not. The former can learn twice as much from his visit, after reading Mr. Cutler's book, as he would without that pleasure; the latter (if he does justice to the vast amount of information offered him) will know more, though absent, than many will learn during even a careful and studious visit. Address Star Publishing Co., 315-321 Wabash Ave., Chicago, Ill.

REV. N. P. GILMORE'S book, "Conduct as a Fine Art," is winning many words of praise from high sources. "The essays completely meet the condition of teaching pure morals without inculcating religious doctrine," says Rev. C. F. Dole in the *Christian Register.* Rev. Francis Tiffany writes in the Boston *Herald* that "they stimulate thought and inspire the sense that conduct is nine-tenths of human life."

OUR neighbor publishers, Searle and Gorton, 69 Dearborn Street, Chicago, have just issued the first number of "The Young Patriot Series," a short story by Rev. Edward Everett Hale, entitled "Afloat and Ashore." It is a pretty piece of inexpensive bookmaking, and the quality of a story by Dr. Hale needs not to be characterized. Price, forty cents.

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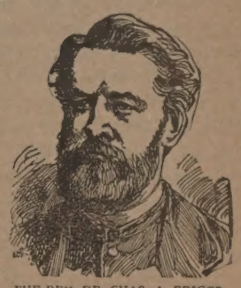

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Church Door Pulpit.

Christmas from an Ethical Standpoint.

A Lecture Delivered Before the Society for Ethical Culture, of Chicago, at the Grand Opera House, December 23, 1888. By William M. Salter.*

The Christian churches celebrate on Christmas day the birth of a God in the world. What right then have those who do not credit such an event to share in the joys of the Christmas season? The churches would probably deny any such right; and there are, perhaps, liberals who coincide in the ecclesiatical opinion, and, indeed, hate the church so well, that anything that reminds them of it, they would like to put out of sight and out of mind. The Ethical Society raises no question of theological opinion; the Christian is welcome here, and so is the extreme liberal. We exalt here what is far above all speculative differences, what is more important than either the creed of the Christian or the unbelief of the liberal—namely the cause of the good in the world. We look at all things from the moral standpoint; wherever we can find signs of good and progress, whether it be an event in nature, or in history, there we find an occasion to rejoice. The question for us is, does Christmas commemorate anything of moral significance to mankind? Are we by it reminded of anything that does us good to remember, anything that does or should give us courage and joy?

It may surprise some of us to learn that Christmas is older than the Christian church, and is not, at bottom, a Christian festival at all. It really commemorates the new birth of the sun. Suppose the sun should go on making his path across the skies shorter and shorter, that he should rise later and set earlier—that his rays should be ever more and more feeble, what would become of our earth? In the northern parts of Norway, it is said, the sun disappears entirely for days in midwinter. Suppose he did not reappear; or suppose he reappeared, but that here and everywhere he possessed no greater force than he has ordinarily in our winter months, and that spring and summer brought no change, where would spring and summer be? Where would the grass be, and the budding leaves, and the grain and corn on which man and beast must live? It is the sun that gives us life. Not only light and warmth and radiance, but life itself would sooner or later vanish from the earth, if the sun ceased to shine—or if he were only stripped of his power, shorn of his locks all the year through, as he is in winter. What joy, then, when we discover that there is an end to the diminishing of his strength; that at a certain period he turns about and begins to climb higher in the skies, makes longer days, and promises spring and summer in due time! Praise be to the sun, we exclaim, and hope and courage fill the heart once more.

There were few ancient peoples who did not have a midwinter festival growing out of such experiences. Particularly was this true of the Celtic and the Germanic tribes. The Yule-tide of the Germans which lasted for twelve days, from December 25 to January 6—has perpetuated its name down to the present time. The Yule-log is still thrown on the hearth in English homes on Christmas eve, at least in such as keep up old customs. From the Germans come the Christmas-tree with its lighted candles. From them, the mistletoe, with which homes were adorned, and under a branch of which any fair one being found, had to submit to a salute; and many of the beautiful green decorations which at this season we love so well. From the ancient Germans, too, have come the festivities of eating and drinking—the mirth and the good cheer, that are inseparable from our idea of Christmas. The truth is, that the Christian church simply took an old holy-time and gave to it, not an altogether new, but an added significance. It was from the West, from the churches in Gaul in particular, that the impulse arose which finally led to the adoption of the 25th of December as the birthday of Jesus in the church universally. The Gallic church baptized the old Yule-festival, which its converts, no doubt, persisted in celebrating, with the Christian spirit, and said it should stand, not only for the new birth of the sun, but for the rising of that light among the nations which Christians associated with Jesus. For I need hardly say to those who are familiar with the Bible, that there is no statement in it, as to either the day, or the month, or the year, of the birth of Jesus. No tradition, even, came down upon the subject. As a matter of fact there were Christians who observed a day in April, others who observed the 25th of May. An eminent scholar, who illustrates a simplicity in accepting Scripture statements which it is now difficult to credit, placed it in September, remarking that "that month was remarkable for very many things: in it the world was created, the tabernacle begun, and the temple consecrated."* An ingenious argument has been made out in behalf of October. The church in the East generally regarded the 6th of January—until the latter part of the fourth century when Chrysostom in one of his sermons told his flock that that ten years were not past since the true date had been learned from the Western Church.† In fact, if we may infer anything from the beautiful Scripture legends of the shepherds keeping watch over their flocks at night in the fields of Bethlehem at the time, it is almost impossible that December should have been the month, since December is the height of the rainy season in Judea, and neither flocks nor shepherds could have been out at night. But since nothing was known, almost any time could be chosen; and there were the best of reasons for settling upon the 25th of December, which was already fixed in the affections of so many as one of the days of their festive Yule-tide. There are even authorities in the church, which "give prominence to this idea in the Christmas festival; and one of the early popes said of the day that it commemorated rather the return of the sun, than the birth of Christ."‡

But Christmas not only takes us back to our barbarian ancestors; it is also in part a relic of the old Roman civilization. One of the most popular festivals in Italy was that in honor of Saturn, the god of sowing and agriculture. At the conclusion of the labor of the year, it was a sort of harvest-home and lasted from the 17th to the 24th of December. Saturn, himself, was fabled to have been a king in Latium in the good old days, when the peaceful pursuits of agriculture ruled among the people; when men lived without falsehood and without strife; when there was universal freedom and equality. Even now we speak of "the golden age of Saturn," and Pope writes of

"Augustus, born to bring Saturnian times."

The festival of Saturn, or the Saturnalia became, as it were, a pictorial return to those happy days of dim antiquity. All business subsided, the courts took a holiday, and warlike expeditions had a doubtful expediency during this festive time. The temples of the god were made splendid with decoration—and the green holly with its red berries has come down to us from this period of rejoicing. Presents were universally exchanged, particularly of waxen candles and little figures in clay which might be used by children in play; it is from old Rome that the custom of making presents at this Christmas season has come to us. There was the utmost freedom of social intercourse permitted to all classes during the Saturnalia; the very slaves regained their freedom for the time, were treated as equals by their masters, could sit with them at their tables, and were often waited upon by those whom they were accustomed to serve. Horace devotes one of his satires to this license given to slaves; in it, Davus, his slave, is represented as reading Horace a serio-comic lecture upon the follies of his life. It goes without saying that all this freedom and mirth and hilarity often degenerated; the "Saturnalia" is often with us a synonym for unbridled license; but at bottom the festival had the character and origin I have indicated.

This festival, too, coming so near to the 25th of December, was rechristened by the church, purified of its excesses, at least for a time, and turned into a rejoicing over the birth of Christ rather than over the fabled reign of Saturn. The Bishop of Turin even urged that there was a special providence in appointing the birth of Christ to take place in the midst of the pagan festivals—so that men might be led to feel ashamed of pagan superstition and pagan excesses. The excellent church historian, Neander, who quotes these words of the Bishop, says the 25th of December was fixed for that of the birth of Jesus to draw away people from the pagan festival, which closed at that time. How plainly some of the dearest features of our Christmas season are drawn from the old Saturnalia! Our custom of giving presents, I have already referred to; also our use of the holly. The children were particularly thought of then, as now. Our carols correspond to the hymn sung in praise of Saturn at his festival. The hymn of the nativity of Jesus is still sung in the streets of Rome, just as the hymn to Saturn was in earlier days. Yes, there are features of the Christmas time, unhappily, though perhaps in part also happily, gone out of use in recent years, that are a most evident survival of the Roman Saturnalia. I refer to the sentiments and practices in favor of brotherhood and equality that obtained even in feudal England before the rise of Puritanism. Then, according to good authority,* the peasant and even the pauper were made once a year sharer in the mirth of their immediate lord, and even of the monarch himself; the laboring classes had enlarged privileges not only by custom, but by positive enactment; and restrictive acts of Parliament by which they were prohibited from certain games at other periods, contained exceptions in favor of the Christmastide. The resemblance to the old Roman festival is still closer, for, as in Rome, a "king of sports" was chosen for that time, so at the English Court and in the houses of the wealthy, an officer was appointed to superintend the revels, who was called the "Lord of Misrule"; in Scotland also a similar functionary was appointed under the title of the "Abbot of Unreason." There were music and conjuring, and gaming and dancing, and blind-man's-buff, and other sports, the mention of which would convey no meaning unless accompanied by explanation; and doubtless there were often wild rioting and excess, such as had disgraced the ancient Saturnalia; but in the main the picture which Sir Walter Scott gives us in *Marmion* was probably a true one:

"On Christmas-eve the bells were rung;
On Christmas-eve the mass was sung:

* * * * * *

Then opened wide the Baron's hall
To vassal, tenant, serf and all;
Power laid his rod of rule aside,
And ceremony doffed his pride,
The heir with roses in his shoes
That night might village partner choose.
All smiled with uncontrolled delight
And general voice, the happy night
That to the cottage as the crown
Brought tidings of salvation down.
England was merry England when
Old Christmas brought his sports again.
'Twas Christmas broached the mightiest ale,
'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale,
A Christmas gambol oft would cheer
A poor man's heart through half the year."

How can those who do not take an ascetic view of life, who recognize the rights of the senses, who believe in joy and mirth as a part of man's dower and among his best privileges, avoid regretting that such joyful occasions almost ceased to be, when Puritanism gained the upper hand in England, yes, that a cloud was at that time cast over them from which they have never since completely emerged? Said a rhymster in the seventeenth century:

"Gone are those golden days of yore
When Christmas was a high day;
Whose sports we now shall see no more,
'Tis turn'd into Good Friday."

The Puritans apparently did not believe in reforming abuses; they sought to abolish them root-and-branch. They did not try to see and save the soul of good in things evil; but with the evil, they destroyed the good also. Of somewhat narrow mind as well as ascetic temperament, they took delight in the discovery that the Christmas festivities were partly a continuance of the old Saturnalia, and Prynne, a Puritan lawyer, who wrote a book attacking players as the ministers of Satan, theaters as the devil's chapels, attacking also hunting and May-poles, cards, music, false hair, and the decking of houses at Christmas with evergreens, said in the course of it, that the lords of misrule, together with dancing, masques, mummeries, stage-players, and other such Christmas disorders were derived from the Roman Saturnalia and Bacchanalian festivals—"which should cause all pious Christians eternally to abominate them." The Puritan parliament of 1647 actually abolished the observance of Saints days and the "three grand festivals," Christmas, Easter and Whitsuntide, "any law, custom, constitution or canon to the contrary in anywise notwithstanding." Yes, Puritan New England followed this example of narrow bigotry; the general court of Massachusetts exacted in 1659 that anybody who was found observing, by abstinence from labor, feasting or any other way, any such day as Christmas day should pay for such offence five shillings.

Though both these laws were set aside or appealed after a few years, both Old England and New have hardly yet got over the effects of the temper in which they were enacted; life has been grimmer ever since, and I can understand something of what Matthew Arnold means when he says (I quote from memory) that Puritanism turned the key on the human spirit and kept it locked in its prison-house for over two hundred years. We, of British antecedents, are just beginning to recognize our right to a heritage of joy that we have been denied so long. And happy are the countrymen of Luther, who was of a broader mind and more genial temperament, who never frowned on Christmas joys or taught others to,

*The writer acknowledges his indebtedness, in preparing this lecture, to Sandy's *Christmastide*; to a beautiful article by Geo. William Curtis, in *Harper's Magazine*, December, 1883, and a learned treatment of "Christmas and the Saturnalia," by Rev. Dr. J. P. Thompson, in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, January, 1855 (from the Puritan standpoint).

*Lightfoot, quoted by Rev. Dr. Thompson.
†Bingham, *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, Book xx, ch. iv.
‡Thompson.

*Hervey, *Book of Christmas*.

whose healthy soul was resolved with Charles Wesley, as has been said, that the devil should not have all the good tunes, and one of the most beautiful pictures of whom represents him seated in his home, with his wife and children about him, and a lighted Christmas-tree before them all, while Luther holds an instrument of music in his hands.

Why should anyone, then, whether of German or English birth, feel that he must give up the joys of the Christmas season, because he can not accept the doctrine of the incarnation as true, or the pretty legends about the birth of Jesus as actual history? I say nothing against these things, though for myself I do not believe in them; but I am in the limits of historical fact when I say that they are on the surface of Christmas, and do not belong to its heart and core. To refuse to have anything to do with Christmas, because to many it has become a mere commemoration of events that belong to the realm of fairy-land, seems to be hardly less narrow and unphilosophical than it was for the Puritans to seek to abolish Christmas, because it had run into sensuous excesses. The heart and core of Christmas are sound; it is a festival built upon facts; it is a symbol and expression of the joy of the human heart over the discovery that the powers of nature—and chiefly the sun, the lordliest force in nature—are never long hostile to man, but turn again to be his friends and benefactors; it is a symbol also of friendship and of brotherhood, of the golden age of equality and fraternity which does not truly lie behind us, as the Romans thought, but before us, and of which, and its glory and joy, we can not too often remind ourselves. For my own part, I should like to see more of it and not less; I should like to see it become a season instead of a day, and last seven days or twelve days instead of one; I should like to see a practical brotherhood exhibited in the community for at least so long in the year; I should like to see our wealthy men emulate the example of the wealthy, the nobles and the kings of the mediæval time, and throw their houses and their castles open; I should like to see business suspended and litigation stopped, and war, whether between nations or classes or individuals, put under the ban for at least so long. We have all too little joy in our life; we work too hard; we spoil ourselves for pastime—we toil so for means of living that we forget what it is to live. We should have more holidays, more festivals, and, contrary to the grim spirit of Puritan legislation, which would fine a man for not laboring on Christmas day, or church wardens for decorating their church with evergreens, I would not indeed put men under an opposite compulsion, but would cultivate a spirit in them which would lead them of their own accord to lay down their burdens and their cares more frequently, and give themselves up to jollity. And, methinks, we of this generation are sober and serious enough to prevent any great danger of our running into the excesses which marred the festivals of earlier times.

And yet in saying all this, I am not altogether a Pagan. If one insists on being so, he has still the best of reasons for celebrating Christmas—apart, of course, from the mere name; but whether one will or no, one can not be a Pagan altogether to-day—for we all live in a civilization of which Christianity is an integral part. This great religious fact touches us in many places; it is doubtful if we should even be meeting here from Sunday to Sunday, were it not for Christianity. We can not be Romans if we would, nor can we become like our Teutonic ancestors, with their simple, childlike hearts and minds. We are older and new streams of influence have poured into our lives. To my mind, if we set ourselves against Christianity and all Christian influences, we are not even so philosophical, so wise in our day and generation, as the Christian church was, which took up so much into itself from the old pagan culture and from the ideas and customs of the barbarians of the north. If the method of the world is, as one of the greatest living philosophers asserts, one of evolution, if the course of religious progress itself is marked by the absorption of what is true and good in ancient forms, and the sloughing off simply of what is outworn and outlived, then to stand simply in an attitude of contradiction and hostility to Christianity is a fundamental mistake. Nor let me be understood as speaking for and to merely those of Christian birth or antecedents.

Behind us, stands not only Christianity, but Judaism; only—and this capital fact can be more readily recognized by those who no longer hold to Judaism as their distinctive religious faith—Judaism has affected the modern world chiefly through Christianity. I might say that Christianity at the outset *was* Judaism, but divested of what made it an exclusive, a racial religion. If Christianity had been what Peter would have had it in his controversy with Paul, it would have been but a Jewish sect; but the daring moral genius of Paul burst the old national bonds—to him circumcision was nothing, and uncircumcision nothing, but a new creature was all in all. It was the old ethical spirit of the prophets that arose again in Jesus and that burned in the mind of Paul—all of them Jews—that gave rise to and was the heart of Christianity; and some day, I believe, large-minded Jews will be ready to acknowledge this, and to see that it is Judaism in pure and universal form that has triumphed in Christianity, though it is true that Christianity became in time as much bound by creed as ever Judaism was by race. Christianity—what was it at the outset? It was simply an assertion that the reign of justice and of brotherhood, of which the prophets dreamed, was nigh at hand. The prophets expected it sooner than it came; Jesus expected it sooner than it came—but though they were united in error, they were also in the same essential faith and hope. Jesus never spoke of what is now the Christian heaven; his thoughts were fixed on the earth, and the meek and the good, he declared, should inherit it. His error, his illusion, his seeming, though not real, vanity in placing himself at the head of the new order of things expected, are as nothing compared with his faith that such an order of things would be, and with the new life that he thereby gave to an old and dying society.

At the bottom of the Roman world lay a sort of despair; it, too, dreamed of a golden age, but placed it far away in the past; the selfishness and tyranny of the rich and the poverty of the poor, the increasing loss of the ancient liberties and the increasing power of consuls and emperors, were too real to allow the hope to grow that the mild and joyous reign of Saturn could ever come again. The Saturnalia itself ran, no doubt, to excess and wilder revelry, because in the actual life of men—of the mass of men—there was so little cheer or joy. It is the imperishable glory of Christianity that it put its golden age in the future and gave fresh courage to fainting, famishing human hearts. We, to whom orthodox theology has made the gospel synonymous with tales of hell and damnation, can hardly imagine what it was that gave such power and charm to the message of the early Christian propagandists. It lay in the fact that neither hell nor heaven were held out to men, but a glorified and transfigured life on earth, and hell meant to be banished from that blessed company and destroyed—banished, it should be added, not by arbitrary decrees, but in punishment for wilful wrong, because, and in so far, as men loved evil rather than good.

Christmas has come to stand in a measure for the birthday of that Son of Israel, with whom this beneficent movement to mankind as a matter of history originated. I, for one, see no reason to banish Jesus from our thought of Christmas. There are reasons enough for joy at this season without Jesus, but the remembrance of him makes one reason more. It is of little moment that we do not know that December 25 was his birthday. The sons of New England have just celebrated Forefathers' Day—the day when the "Mayflower" Pilgrims landed on the bleak New England coast; the 21st of December is the day set, but I believe it was not the day on which the Pilgrims landed—it is recognized by many as not the day.* What matters it? It is the hardy, heroic men and women—and I should be sorry to have it thought from what I have said that I do not recognize great qualities in those founders of our country—it is they who are honored, not the accidental day of the month or week, on which their feet touched dry land. The exact time of the birth of Jesus is also a matter of indifference; so, it might be added, is the question whether he was born of a virgin, or whether the angelic host announced his birth to wondering shepherds; so is the question whether he was incarnate God. The only question of moment is: Have streams of influence for good gone out from him? Has he helped our world? Does the remembrance of him give us courage and hope? I will not speak of Jesus personally to-day. I have done that on previous occasions. Most of you know something of my thought of him. What I wish to speak of is his influence on the world—and though this is a large subject I do not mean it in a large way; I mean his influence on the old pagan world during the first centuries in which Christianity was becoming established in it. It is a simple matter of history, and happily for us who are not first-hand historical students, a man of candor and of uncommonly balanced judgment, a man who is scarcely a Christian in the dogmatic sense of the word, but who has mined deeply into the first Christian centuries, has given us the result of his studies—I refer to Lecky, and his *History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne*. Lecky excludes all considerations of a theological or controversial character; he is concerned with the church, simply as a moral agent, exercising its influence in Europe. What are his conclusions?

In the first place, he notices that there was nothing in the ancient world corresponding to what we understand by the church. Religion, of course, existed, but it was almost destitute of moral character. It was but the means of winning the favor of the gods; it was largely political; it included no moral agencies, like preaching or preparing for the sacrament or confession; Lecky even says that "to make men virtuous was no more the function of the priest than of the physician." What an immense change it was to have a religion introduced which was nothing in essence but morality transfigured; which, "unlike all pagan religions" (to use Lecky's own words) made moral teaching a main function of the clergy, moral discipline the main object of its services, moral dispositions the necessary condition of the due performance of its rites! Christianity became itself paganized more or less in time, and it developed features that wrought harm to man; but at the outset and while its force was still fresh, what a moral glow invested it; how it worked to arouse and give strength to the dormant consciences of men!

Let us notice how this new moral force worked in detail. Herbert Spencer speaks of the typical natures of ancient and modern times, as respectively courage and chastity. I would venture to add to chastity, humanity as also characteristic of our modern world. Yet to whatever degree chastity and humanity exist in modern society—and I well know it is not to an unlimited degree—we owe it more to Christianity than to any other influences that can be specified. This does not mean that all virtue is Christian—for neither patriotism nor intellectual honesty are Christian virtues; nor does it mean that chastity and humanity are Christian as distinct from Jewish virtues—Christianity in these respects, as in general, is simply Judaism universalized and carried into effect. What I mean is, that as compared with the old Greek and Roman world, they are Christian virtues. If you doubt that Christianity made a moral advance on the old civilization in its ideal of a family, of the obligations of husband as well as wife, you should read certain utterances of Cicero and Epictetus, which I might quote, were this a fitting place to do so;* yes, you should read of the visit of Socrates himself to the famous Aspasia.† Nothing is plainer than that our ideas of marital faithfulness were comparatively unknown to the ancient world—and that, though ultimately, of course, of Jewish origin they have come to us by way of Christianity. I grant that we are not faithful to our ideas; I grant that modern society is corrupt enough—but our advantage over the ancient world is that the ideas are in our possession; that we know when we sin against them; that we have, in short, so far, a conscience which the ancient world did not have; and no doubt the forces of conscience are continually working though they do not accomplish all we desire.

Consider next the spirit of humanity, the new sense of the sanctity of human life that Christianity brought along with it. *Unborn children* came to be treated under its influence with a reverence that was never known before. What we call criminal practices were not criminal in the pagan world. Aristotle would even favor them when the population threatened to exceed certain limits. But the church classed them along with infanticide, and by the Council of Ancyra the guilty mother was excluded from the sacrament till the very hour of her death. The custom of *exposing* new-born children who were not wanted by their parents, was practised on a gigantic scale in the old world: the church set its face *as* sternly against this ignoring of the sanctity of human life. The *gladiatorial shows* are vividly remembered by every student of ancient history; philosophers, as Lecky remarks, might indeed deplore them, gentle natures might shrink from their contagion, but to the multitude they possessed a charm which nothing but the new religion could overcome. So intense was the craving for blood, that a prince was less unpopular if he neglected the distribution of corn, than if he neglected the games; and Nero himself, on account of his munificence in this respect, was probably the sovereign who was most beloved by the Roman multitude. I must not linger over this repulsive subject, but Lecky says, the consideration of it will enable us in some degree to estimate the

*See Rev. Dr. Thompson in the article already referred to.

* See Lecky, Vol. II. p. 314.

† See Xenophon's Memorabilia, Book III. ch. xi.

regenerating influence that Christianity has exercised in the world; "for the destruction of the gladiatorial games is all its work."

War was regarded with an almost Quaker feeling in the primitive church. Though in any special case the war was a righteous one, no general or emperor who had been engaged in it, could approach the altar without a preparatory period of penance; and priests were for a long time kept from persecuting heresy to death, from similar motives. *Suicide* had been treated in the ancient world with mild approval, at least without absolute disapproval. Here, too, Christianity worked a change in the sentiments of men. Suicide was to it self-*murder;* a sin. *Slavery*, though its absolute wrongfulness was never taught, had many of its features mitigated under Christian influence; a new consideration was put into the hearts of masters; at least in the church, the master and slave were on perfectly equal footing; and an unexampled impetus was given to the movement of enfranchisement. Captives in war were continually redeemed under the influence of the church; in no other form of charity, says Lecky, was its beneficial influence more continually and splendidly displayed. So, *charity*, in the technical sense of the term, had no such place in antiquity as it has in modern society. Something was done for the poor in the old world, but nothing compared to what the modern world does, under originally Christian influence. The church made charity a rudimentary virtue. The Council of Nicæa (325 A. D.) ordered that a hospital should be erected in every city.

Hence, while Christianity has been far from being an unmixed blessing to the world, it has been a blessing—and, after the facts I have recited, I trust you will see that it is not from any vague sentiment, but for good reasons, that I say this. Christianity has worked for good and for evil; and the wise and philosophical way is to remember and treasure up its good, and to slough off its evil. There is no reason why all lovers of humanity should not remember Jesus on Christmas day, as well as the new light which dawns in the heavens, and the golden age, the legend of which became interwoven with the Roman festival of Saturn. There is no reason why this society should not celebrate Christmas in an enlightened and rational, and yet no less joyful, way of its own. There is no reason why this place of meeting, which is no worse for being a theatre, should not be decked with holly and evergreen; why our children, as well as others, should not have a Christmas tree. Ethics is not a joyless thing; it consists in contemplating life from the highest point of view; it naturally carries with it a certain elation of spirit. If joy is one of the privileges of man, then to create it is one of the noblest moral tasks. I express my own feeling, at least, when I say: Let Christmas be to us, in the future, a time of joy; let it be an oasis in our much-toiling, much-suffering, and, at best, too prosaic life; let us so celebrate it that it shall, in distant years, be a green spot in our memory; yes, one to which our children shall revert in loving recollection!

It is not easy to act rightly. It is the most difficult duty; it is the most exasperating task. For right action presupposes, not the merging of self into non-self, or into the Deity, but the control of self, the development of self, not for selfish ends, but for the purpose of linking one's self to the great energy of all humanity.—*E. G. Hirsch.*

Notes from the Field.

Boston.—Rev. A. D. Mayo has gone to Washington to begin his twelfth annual mission in behalf of Southern schools.

—The Unitarian Club heard a radical but fair statement of the advances of "new orthodoxy" made by Rev. Dr. Lyman Abbott. It was a notable gathering of eminent clergymen and laymen of all shades of religious opinion.

—The new building at Tufts College in Somerville (suburb), mostly the gift of Dr. Miner, is being rapidly finished.

—At the annual supper of the "Young People's Club" of Rev. C. G. Ames' church, nearly all the city and suburban parishes fraternalized by delegations.

—Rev. S. W. Brooke led the noon service at King's Chapel. One practical lesson from his topic of Jesus' temptation was that a young woman who marries an intemperate lover, hoping to redeem him, casts herself down and suffers a fate which she might have foreseen as a Satanic temptation.

—A gain in no license is returned from the towns of Eastern Massachusetts, particularly in our suburbs.

—A very successful doll show is now open to aid the treasury of the Kindergarten for the Blind.

—A notable meeting of past and present newspaper editors and proprietors manifested respect for the memory of Col. Wm. W. Clapp, former owner of the *Daily Journal* and of the Sunday newspaper, which filled the needs of the past generation. It was our first Sunday paper and was called and still is called *The Saturday Evening Gazette.*"

—Fresh books on Christianity,—Bible criticism, Christian History and kindred subjects are asked for by the Japanese mission for the use of its native students. Such may be sent to Mrs. T. C. Williams, 117 East 36th Street, New York City, who will, if asked, send a list of desirable books.

—The Monday Club, December 14, discussed "Can we have Circuits?" Rev. Albert Walkley, of Brighton, opened the discussion.

—Rev. Henry G. Spalding has resigned his office as secretary of the Unitarian Sunday School Society. He will, with his family, take a long trip through California, and later resume pulpit labors, perhaps in that state. His gifts of organization, authorship, musical talent and his enthusiasm in the development of Sunday-schools and their new methods have made his service marked as eminently valuable to our denomination, and as well to others.

St. Paul, Minn.—The St. Paul *Pioneer Press* of Monday, Dec. 14, prints in full the third sermon of Rev. S. M. Crothers at Unity Church in his fortnightly series on the "Great Religions of the World." His subject was, "What we owe to Wesley and Methodism." If any of Mr. Crothers' Methodist neighbors were so fortunate as to be in the large congregation to hear that sermon, they must have gone away with the conviction that the Unitarian minister appreciated to the full that spiritual movement in the history of religion called "Methodism," and yet that, in his thought, "the new Methodism" will read larger meaning into Wesley's doctrines. Mr. Crothers acknowledges our debt to Methodism for "bringing to us all the thought of religion as an inward experience, as a present reality, as something independent of all outward statements, bringing the idea of that true liberality which is the actual grasping of the brother's hand and not the talking about doing it. This is the great warm current that has touched us all." Again he says: "While we give approbation to the actual Methodism, in spite of its morbid introspections and frequently narrow thoughts, our hearts kindle into faith and reverence for that ideal Methodism which is growing more and more to be a reality. It is Methodism outgrowing its early limitations and entering into the larger culture of our time."

Women's Western Unitarian Conference. The following invitation has been sent out by the secretary of the Women's Conference. The second of a series of Religious Councils under the management of the Women's Western Unitarian Conference is to be held in Sherwood, Mich., beginning on the evening of Tuesday January 5th and ending on Thursday the 7th. The opening sermon of Tuesday will be by Rev. Jenkins Lloyd Jones, of Chicago. On Wednesday and Thursday there will be three sessions each, addressed by a number of Unitarian ministers and laymen, among whom will be Rev. Ida C. Hultin, Rev. H. T. Root, Rev. Caroline J. Bartlett, Rev. W. D. Simonds and others. Profitable and interesting meetings are looked for. Topics of present and living interest will be discussed, among which will be the World's Fair. This subject it is hoped will be presented by a Chicago director.

All interested friends are urgently invited to come and participate in the good time anticipated, and to extend this invitation as far as possible. M. H. PERKINS, *Sec.*

Madison, Wis.—The installation of Rev. H. C. McDougall took place Tuesday evening, Dec. 15. The night was perfect. The audience was large, and a general feeling of satisfaction was prevalent. The order of service was simple. Reading of scripture and prayer by Rev. Sophie Gibb, of Janesville; sermon by Rev. W. W. Fenn of Chicago; act of Installation by Hon. Mr. Giles, of Madison; fellowship of the churches, by Rev. H. F. Secrist, of Milwaukee; address to church by Rev. T. B. Forbush, of Chicago. Mr. Fenn's sermon was on Moral Gravitation, and was very strong and earnest. After the installation there was a social reunion and a supper served in the church dining room. Both Mr. and Mrs. McDougall and the church seem very happy in their new relation.—T. B. F.

Wenona, Ill.—A friend writes from Wenona: "The Sunday Circle made its first venture in public last Monday and Tuesday evenings, Dec. 7th and 8th. It had secured Rev. L. J. Duncan to deliver two discourses with which the 'Circle' was delighted, and the impression made on all who heard him was very favorable. The only mistake made was in not keeping him longer, as the last evening there was a very good attendance, and the discourse 'Rational Religion' being extremely fine. Said one gentleman, 'At first, I thought it was so far ahead of me that I could not grasp it, but the more I pondered on it, the more I thought I could accept nothing less than this grand thought of religion.' It well deserves to be printed so that we may read and re-read it."

Oakland, Cal.—We are in receipt of the calendar of officers, appointments, by-laws and list of members of the Starr King Fraternity of Oakland, Cal., for the sixth season, 1891–92. The officers are John P. Irish, President; Chas. J. Woodbury and B. C. Cuvellier, Vice Presidents; S. P. Channell, Treasurer; Mrs. A. G. Freeman, 1137 Linden St., and Miss Emma J. Breck, Secretaries; with Rev. C. W. Wendte, Mrs. K. B. Fisher, Edw. Von Adelung, Jr., Mrs. N. W. Palmer, Directors. In addition to the "University Extension" course mentioned in a recent number of UNITY, a variety of Readings, Lectures, Musical and other entertainments have been provided for the season, ending May, 1892.

Certificate of Fellowship.—The Rev. John Milton Scott, of Sewickley, Pennsylvania, formerly a minister of the Baptist church, having asked to be admitted to the Unitarian fellowship, and having furnished satisfactory proof that he is well fitted to do good service in our ministry and is eminently worthy of our recognition, is hereby cordially commended to the confidence of our churches and the fellowship of our ministers. J. F. Moors, Chairman; D. W. Morehouse, Secretary, Committee of Fellowship of the National Conference of Unitarian and other Christian Churches.

Denver, Col.—From "Unity Notes," Denver, Col., Dec. 13, we glean the following: "The Swedish Unitarian Society continues to grow under the care of Mr. P. J. Andrews. Audiences of from fifty to one hundred gather, and much interest is shown. Everything points to the establishment of a strong Swedish church before long. The annual meeting of the first Unitarian Society of Denver was held in the church parlors on Monday evening, November 16. The annual reports of the minister, Samuel A. Elliott, and of the several church officers revealed a prosperous condition of church life and work."

Menomonie, Wis.—The Unitarian Society at Menomonie, though sorrowful, is full of courage and determined that the work, so nobly begun by Mr. Maxson, shall go on as nearly as possible in the way he would have liked it to go. "Miss Tupper and Mr. Simmons have preached for us. Mr. Forbush and Mr. Sample are coming. When we can not get a minister a sermon is read," writes a friend. The Sunday-school meets as usual. The Christmas services, as planned by Mr. Maxson, will be carried out.

Shelbyville, Ill.—*Our Best Words Weekly* of November 28, contains the following editorial note: "It may be proper to state that the sum voted by the Western Unitarian Conference for the 'Surprise' fund was an entirely voluntary offering made in the spirit of good-will. The committee did not solicit it, but was itself very pleasantly surprised."

The Western Unitarian Sunday School Society has published for the Christmas trade an attractive card designed by a Chicago friend. A number of the larger Sunday Schools have supplied themselves with these cards to distribute to their children for Christmas souvenirs. There are still a few more available if ordered soon. Price, $2.00 per hundred.

Englewood, Ill.—Mrs. Mary A. Livermore lectured Monday evening, Dec. 14, in the First Universalist Church of Englewood. The honor of introducing Mrs. Livermore, says the *Universalist Messenger*, was given by Miss Kollock to Col. Parker, of the Cook County Normal School.

Toledo, Ohio.—Rev. A. G. Jennings, pastor of the "Church of Our Father," has recently returned from Kendallville, where he preached four consecutive week-evenings to good audiences.

Western Conference.—The Directors of the Western Unitarian Conference will meet at Headquarters on Tuesday, January 12, at 2 P. M.

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Thurs.—Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.
Fri.—The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.
Sat.—He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do.

—*Jesus.*

Madonna Di Sisto.

Rare Raphael, Urbino's lovely child!
Whose golden locks encluster brows so mild,
What visions dost thou see, oh, angel wise,
That fill with radiance thy glorious eyes?
Dost thou the secrets of the stars divine?
Hear heavenly strains, for which our spirits pine?
Heaven has but lent us thee awhile;
Its songs of love still linger in thy smile.
With art and moving power thou dost portray
Life's lesson—Love! Love, in its purest ray,
Enduring, mother-love, which, unconfined,
Will teach us, Christ-like, how to love mankind.

—*Florence M. Holbrook, in "Love and Loyalty."*

Our Christmas-Tree.

It was such a tiny tree! In fact, it was not a tree at all, though we dignified it by the name, but merely a large broken branch, which the father picked up in the market for a quarter, and carried home with the turkey. But it gave unbounded joy to ten little hearts and much happiness to five big ones.

Planted in a pail, and mounted on a stand in the sitting room, it looked quite imposing, at least we thought so.

Silvery globes shining through the dark green foliage; glittering bonbons on the boughs; bright-hued reins gracefully festooned, making melody with their little tinkling bells; fifty wax tapers, red, green, yellow and blue, all combined to make it a thing of beauty, and a joy for the time being, if not forever. Luscious golden oranges, pink and white bags of toothsome confections, and various packages were ranged around its base.

At four o'clock the party began to arrive. First came the Dominie, poor, lonely and learned. It is an unwritten law of our household that he shall spend all festival days with us. Then appeared Charles and Jamie, their cheeks all ruddy and aglow from a brisk walk in the clear frosty air.

The street cars brought the next arrivals, for they were frail little Felix, just recovering from a broken leg, and his elder sister, Felicia, herself half an invalid, but as cheery and happy as her name.

Then followed pale-faced Nellie, and curly-haired Mollie, with Willie and Mamie bringing up the rear.

Dimple and Dot, our own little cherubs, who were only just beginning to learn the meaning of Christmas, gravely escorted each new arrival to the wonderful tree, and many were the surmises as to the contents of those mysterious brown paper packages. They were of all shapes and sizes; some little, others big; round, square, and oblong; each marked with a cabalistic number which gave no clue whatever to the puzzled little brains.

When all the guests had become duly acquainted, tea was announced, and while we were doing justice to the Christmas cheer in the dining room, the father illuminated the tree. What a brilliant blaze of light greeted our eyes as we entered the room! The little ones clapped their hands in ecstasy as they danced around. Each received a bag of candy, orange, bonbon, and present. And how hard it was to open those packages; they were tied so securely, and the nervous little fingers could not easily untie the big knots. The Dominie received a bachelor's needle-book, worked in red and gold.

The father's artistic tastes were gratified by a dainty bit of water-color, while Madeleine was made happy with a volume of "Attic Philosophy." Although she does n't *quite* live in an attic, she often finds the philosophy of the one who did, very helpful.

Felicia found a calendar, Mollie a book of fairy stories, Nellie, a doll. The boys, handkerchiefs and mittens. Grandpapa, warm over-shoes, and gloves. Felix, Dimple and Dot, each a pretty picture book. Then we played blind-man's-buff, and other games. The room was cleared, the father blindfolded, and such a time as he had, catching the merry children! Finally he captured Mollie and Jamie, one under each arm; Grandpapa, Baby, and the Dominie meanwhile sitting in the doorway, beaming on everybody. At eight o'clock we broke up, and I think a merrier party could not be found in the whole city.

Before leaving, all joined in singing the old refrain:

"It is the time of gladness,
Let every heart be gay,
Throw off dull care and sadness
This blessed Christmas day."

Grandpa said it was the happiest Christmas he had spent in twenty years. The Dominie solemnly and impressively observed that it was to him a most joyful occasion, while the father voiced the sentiment of all when he exclaimed: "This has been an *ideal* Christmas day."

M. R. H.

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VI.—THE RELIGION OF PERSIA.

LESSON XVI.

(a) The Land and Empire. Zoroaster and the Avesta.

REFERENCES for the Religion of Persia:
Oriental Religious Persia.—*Samuel Johnson.*
Essays on the Sacred Writings, Language and Religion of the Persians.—*M. Haug.*
Media, Babylon and Persia.—*Zénaide A. Ragozin.*
Herodotus.—translated by *Henry Cary.*

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2. Name some of its kings or generals.
3. Zoroaster. What traditions are related of his infancy, life, mission and death?
4. The Zend-Avesta. What can be said of these scriptures? Their age, extent, preservation and character.
5. What the Greeks said of the Persians,—their character, worship, customs, etc.

NOTES.

The Persian Empire founded by Cyrus, extended by Darius, and led towards its decline by Xerxes. Babylon and Memphis, Marathon, Thermopylæ, Salamis and Platæa, had parts to play in this history.

The Persians were a brave and hardy race, despising art and money-making. They said, looking at the Greeks, that if you wish to make a people effeminate, teach them music, give them the occupation of shop-keepers, and let them live by putting their money out at interest.

In the **Avesta** many of the old Aryan myths are spiritualized; physical powers, by poetic treatment, become personal and hence moral.

Like other sacred books, it was a long time making and collecting. There was first, the **Vendidad**, or "Law against the Dêvas"; then the **Vispered**, or invocation to the "Chiefs of the Good Creation"; the **Yasna**, or Prayers of Sacrifice, including the **Gathras**; and finally the **Yashts**, which are later and quite polytheistic hymns of praise for daily worship.

The **Bundeshesh**, a valuable collection of mythological traditions, compiled since the Christian era, contains interesting speculations as to the creation and order of the world, and the end of all things.

The word, **Zend**, is most often explained as meaning a commentary on the **Avesta** (or Law) in the Zend language,—a sister tongue or dialect of the Sanskrit.

The Supreme Being speaks to Zoroaster in the **Avesta**, as Jehovah speaks to Moses or the prophets, revealing his will and ways.

Herodotus says of the Persians (Clio), "To tell a lie is considered by them the greatest disgrace; next to that to be in debt." King Cyrus looked upon trade and commerce as a form of lying and cheating. Hence "the Persians themselves are not accustomed to use markets, nor have they such a thing as a market."

Not till Zoroaster took the hand of Moses, did the Jews cease to be idolaters."—*J. F. Clarke.*

Publisher's Notes.

Christmas will be over by the time this week's UNITY is in the hands of its readers, so we now announce our after-holiday clearance sale. We are desirous of closing out at once, all books in stock, apart from our own publications and those of George H. Ellis, and also all books that are in any way damaged so as not to be salable as perfect copies. Among the latter are a large number of fifty-cent paper books, which have been lying on newsdealers' counters long enough to take away the freshness of the covers, but for all practical purposes are as good as new. We list them as "slightly damaged." Any of the following books will be mailed on receipt of price

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